DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 423 910 IR 057 213

AUTHOR Keener, Deborah S.

TITLE An Evaluation of Genealogical Collections as Perceived by the Members of the Ohio Genealogical Society, Summit County Chapter.

PUB DATE 1998-05-00

NOTE 82p.; Master's Research Paper, Kent State University.

PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses (040) -- Reports - Research (143) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Access to Information; *Genealogy; Information Seeking; *Information Services; *Information Sources; Information Technology; Mail Surveys; Questionnaires; Research Methodology; *Resource Materials; User Needs (Information); *User Satisfaction (Information)

IDENTIFIERS Ohio; Research Results

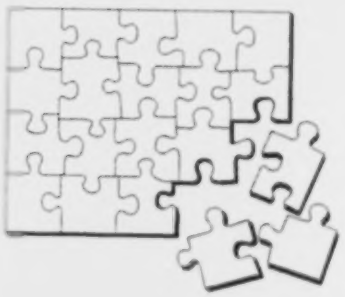
ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a study conducted to determine: (1) if current users of genealogical collections are satisfied with the collections they most frequently use; (2) which types of materials are provided by genealogical collections; (3) which types of materials are deemed most important by the users of the genealogical collection; and (4) possible reasons why users may be satisfied or unsatisfied with genealogical collections. Mail surveys were sent to 221 members of the Ohio Genealogical Society, Summit County Chapter, for a return rate of 52% (115). Demographic and user satisfaction data are discussed and presented in table form. Findings indicated that the most available items appeared to be traditional secondary sources; approximately 86% of the respondents were either satisfied of very satisfied with the material available, satisfaction appeared to be greatest among those items containing the most information, and technological sources were too new to satisfy the more conservative audience; training could improve satisfaction levels regarding technological resources; and overall the respondents were satisfied with the collections they evaluated. An appendix contains the cover letter and user satisfaction questionnaire. Contains 19 references. (Author/DLS)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED 423 910

# AN EVALUATION OF GENEALOGICAL COLLECTIONS AS PERCEIVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE



# OHIO GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, SUMMIT COUNTY CHAPTER

**Deborah S. Keener**
**May 1998**

IR057213

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.



PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
D. P. Wallace
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

ABSTRACT

Mail surveys were sent to 221 members of the Ohio Genealogical Society, Summit County Chapter. One hundred and fifteen members (52 percent) responded.

Several conclusions could be drawn from the data. Genealogists have the tendency to be middle class citizens who hold or have held professional occupations. Many are retired, and many of the members of the Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society have years of experience researching family roots. The availability of staff, how knowledgeable staff members are of genealogy, satisfaction with the collection and services provided, and how easy the collection is to use influence how often genealogists use the collection. Census records/ indexes are the most available sources in genealogical collections while few collections provide access to the Internet or E-mail. Cemetery records, death records, newspaper articles/obituaries, census records/indexes and maps/atlases were considered the most important types of material. The Internet/E-mail was considered the least important type of material.

There were two major concerns of respondents: genealogical collections place microfilm readers in well-lit areas, making it difficult to read the information on the reader. In addition, respondents found many staff members to be unqualified to assist users of the collection and unfriendly toward family researchers.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank several individuals who have contributed to the success of the paper. A special thank you to all of the respondents who returned the questionnaire. This paper would not have been possible without your participation and useful comments. Dr. Rubin, I will forever be in your debt for your wonderful guidance from the very beginning of the research paper. Also, a special thank you to all family who have contributed in any way to the success of this paper.

# AN EVALUATION OF GENEALOGICAL COLLECTIONS AS PERCEIVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE OHIO GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, SUMMIT COUNTY CHAPTER

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Deborah S. Keener

May, 1998

Master's Research Paper by

Deborah S. Keener

B.S.B.A./Marketing, The University of Akron, 1995

M.L.S., Kent State University, 1998

Approved by

Advisor_____Date_____

CONTENTS

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION ..... 1

Background Information ..... 1

Purposes of Study ..... 2

Objectives of Research ..... 3

Definition of Terms ..... 3

2. LITERATURE REVIEW ..... 5

Why Study Genealogy ..... 5

General Information on Genealogy ..... 8

Collection Guidelines ..... 9

Services to Genealogists ..... 10

Studies of Genealogical Collections ..... 13

Methodology ..... 15

Summary ..... 16

3. METHODOLOGY ..... 18

Research Methodology ..... 18

Criteria ..... 18

Limitations of Study ..... 19

4. ANALYSIS OF DATA ..... 20

Response Rate ..... 20

Demographics ..... 20

The Use of the Genealogical Collection ..... 27

Availability of Material ..... 33

Satisfaction with Available Materials ..... 35

Importance of Types of Materials ..... 40

Linking Electronically to Other Collections ..... 46

Microfilm Services ..... 47

Public Copy Machines ..... 49

Overall Grade in Ease of Use ..... 51

Staff ..... 51

Satisfaction of Services Provided ..... 53

Hours of Operation ..... 55

Overall Evaluation of the Collection ..... 56

Other Comments Made by Respondents ..... 57

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS ..... 59

WORKS CITED ..... 64

Appendix

1. Cover letter

2. Questionnaire

LIST OF TABLES


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Table 1 | Age/Employment/Occupation | 21 |
| Table 2 | Years of Research/Years of Membership | 23 |
| Table 3 | Membership Years with Research Years | 24 |
| Table 4 | Occupation with Earnings | 25 |
| Table 5 | Staff Availability Compared With Use | 27 |
| Table 6 | Staff Knowledgeability Compared With Use | 28 |
| Table 7 | Overall Satisfaction Compared With Use | 29 |
| Table 8 | Use of Collection in the Past 12 Months | 30 |
| Table 9 | Ease of Use With Use of the Collection | 32 |
| Table 10 | Availability of Material | 33 |
| Table 11 | Satisfaction With Available Materials | 35 |
| Table 12 | Importance of Materials | 40 |
| Table 13 | Importance vs. No Importance | 43 |
| Table 14 | Linking Electronically/Microfilm Borrowing Privileges | 46 |
| Table 15 | Satisfaction of Microfilm Readers | 48 |
| Table 16 | Satisfaction of Public Copy Machines | 50 |
| Table 17 | Availability of Staff/Knowledgeability of Staff | 52 |
| Table 18 | General Satisfaction | 53 |
| Table 19 | Hours of Operation | 55 |

An Evaluation of Genealogical Collections as Perceived by the Members of the Ohio Genealogical Society, Summit County Chapter

# CHAPTER 1
# INTRODUCTION

## Background Information

The Ohio Genealogical Society (OGS) was founded in 1959. According to the electronic version of the *Encyclopedia of Associations* (1997), the purpose of OGS is to promote "genealogical research and the preservation of historical records in Ohio." It has 6,350 members, two staff members, and the organization has a budget of $158,000. Members consist of "genealogists, historians, libraries, and other interested individuals from throughout the U.S." In addition, OGS sponsors educational programs on family descendants and has several publications.

The Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society was chartered on April 17, 1971. In 1996, there were 223 members included on the roster. One hundred thirty-six, or about 61 percent, of the members currently reside in Ohio. Other members reside in other states, including Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, North and South Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming. In addition, one individual lives in Ontario, Canada.

Genealogy is the third most popular hobby in the United States, led by stamp and coin collecting (Chideya 1992, 65). More than 19 million Americans actively research

family roots (Fulkerson 1995, 44), or approximately 14 percent of the total U.S. population in 1995 (U.S. Department of Commerce 1996, 8). These individuals find family information in a variety of places. In 1995, a poll conducted by Maritz Marketing Research estimated that 26 percent of genealogical researchers use public vital records for information; 13 percent contact a local historical society; and 12 percent contact the Census Bureau's Age Search Unit. Forty-five percent travel to their ancestral hometown or native country to collect information (Fulkerson 1995, 45). Other sources of information include military records, county atlases, and county and family histories. Much of this information can be obtained from libraries, court houses, CD-ROMs, microforms, books, family memorabilia, and the Internet.

Many individuals who are responsible for genealogical collections want to know if their collection is meeting the needs of family historians. This can be determined by communicating with the collection's users, either orally or in a written format. Interviews, focus groups, and surveys are three of the most common means of acquiring user satisfaction information. To determine the satisfaction of the members of the Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society, a mail survey was used.

Purpose of Study

Genealogical collections are used by millions of individuals. Some of these collections are housed in libraries. In many public libraries, a librarian is responsible for developing and maintaining the genealogical collection. An excellent librarian constantly desires to make a collection the best it can be, given limited resources.

Because a collection's success is dependent upon its users, it is important to consult users and seek their opinions on how collections can better meet their needs. This study will address the effectiveness of genealogical collections based on user opinions. It will determine which services and materials satisfy individuals' needs for conducting family research and will suggest ways in which genealogical collections may be enhanced. Strengths and weaknesses can be determined as well. By revealing the strengths and weaknesses of collections, those individuals responsible for maintaining genealogical collections can capitalize on the strengths and have the opportunity to strengthen the weaknesses.

Objectives of Research

There were four major objectives of this study: (1) to determine if current users of genealogical collections are satisfied with the collections they most frequently use; (2) to determine which materials are provided by genealogical collections; (3) to determine which types of materials are deemed most important by the users of the genealogical collections; and (4) to determine possible reasons why users may be satisfied or unsatisfied with genealogical collections.

Definition of Terms

As defined by *Microsoft Encarta 96 Encyclopedia*, genealogy is the "history of the descent of a family, often rendered in a tabular list in the order of succession, with the earliest known ancestor placed at the head and later generations placed in lines of direct and collateral descent." The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives two definitions. It is

"an account of a person's descent from an ancestor or ancestors" and "the investigation of pedigree as a branch of study or knowledge." For the purpose of this study, the term genealogy will be taken in its simplest and most broad form. It is the study and recording of one's family history.

When the term "family" is used, it refers not only to the immediate or extended family. It incorporates all relatives and ancestors of either blood or marriage relations. In addition, it encompasses those individuals who have been adopted into the family either by the courts or by the mere acceptance of family members. In-laws, cousins, and distant cousins are included.

The term "researcher," as used in the context of this study, refers to any individual who actively seeks information about family members. The individual does not need to be a professional genealogist. He could work as a professional, manager or entrepreneur, laborer, clerk, homemaker, or student. The words "genealogist" and "family historian" are used as synonyms for "researcher."

A "genealogical collection" refers to any designated area of a building which is reserved for holding materials which aid genealogical researchers. It may be housed in a separate building constructed or renovated for the dual purpose of organizing and storing material. Both print and non-print items may be found in the collection. Also, it should contain appropriate equipment for retrieving items of non-print format. It may or may not have a full-time staff member. Many are maintained by volunteers.

## CHAPTER 2
## LITERATURE REVIEW

There was very little literature available on genealogical user satisfaction studies. The majority of the articles on genealogy describe genealogical resources available for specific ethnic groups, genealogical resources found in particular libraries, or discuss general information about genealogy.

### Why Study Genealogy?

Many genealogists have their start when they hear a story about an unknown relative and desire to find out more about this relative. They begin asking questions of other relatives and doing research in libraries and courthouses. They become interested in their personal heritage; they want to gain an understanding of how they have come to be who they are. They desire knowledge on why their ancestors migrated from place to place and what social, economic, political, or religious factors affected their ancestors' lives (Waggener 1986, 21). Also, they may want to learn about immigrant ancestors, to determine whether any ancestors fought in the Revolutionary War, or to satisfy a desire to trace a royal line (Lange 1989, 48-49).

Immigration has been the key to the formation of the United States. Beginning in the 1600s with the immigration of the colonists, and continuing into the 1990s, individuals have sought economic opportunities in the United States (Quinn 1991, B2). Land has been plentiful, employment could be found, and the Gold Rush in the United States was an attractive feature during the 1800s (Elliott Robert Barkan, "Immigration," in *World Book Encyclopedia* 1998). Others sought adventure or fled religious

persecution (Barkan 1998, 81). Other individuals were forced to immigrate to the United States. English convicts were deported from England (Barkan 1998, 81), and Africans were taken from their homelands and brought to the United States to serve as slaves (Quinn 1991, B2). Many of the first-generation Americans in the early 1900s were ashamed of their heritage. These Americans chose not to learn about their ancestors (Quinn 1991, B2). Several decades later, after the publication of Alex Haley's *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* in 1976, people developed an interest in who they were and where they came from (Quinn 1991, B2).

Migration has contributed to the increasing numbers of individuals who are not familiar with their ancestry. With the invention and growing popularity of the automobile as well as new interstate highways, individuals in the United States have been able to move from one part of the country to another with ease (Quinn 1991, B2). Family relocations have contributed to the near extinction of our previously stable family-centered culture. After World War II, extended families no longer stayed in touch. Family members moved away from hometowns (Quinn 1991, B2) in search of employment or as the result of job transfers, frequently, never to return (Quinn 1991, B2). Retired family members began to take residence in the South or West and would choose to remain their until they passed away (Quinn 1991, B2). Consequently, the passing on of family traditions from one generation to the next has nearly ceased to exist (Quinn 1991, B2).

There has been a shift in family values during the past few decades. In earlier years, divorce was only acceptable in extreme cases. Now, divorce is a common practice. In 1970, the number of divorces and annulments recorded totaled 708,000. Twenty-five years later, in 1995, approximately 1,169,000 divorces and annulments were recorded (U.S. Department of Commerce 1997, 105). This is an increase of about 39 percent. This increase in divorces has led to many single-parent households. In 1980, there were 616,000 male householders with no spouse and with his own children under 18. In 1996, there were 1,628,000 male householder with no spouse present and with his own children. In 1980, there were 5,445,000 female householders with no spouse present and with her own children under 18. In 1996, there were 7,656,000 female householders with no spouse present and with her own children (U.S. Department of Commerce 1997, 61). The increases in divorce and single-parent households have contributed to children no longer knowing who they are or how they have come to be. Family history and heritage, oral traditions, artifacts, and heirlooms are no longer passed on to grandchildren and great-grandchildren since many of these individuals do not have the opportunity to visit with grandparents and great-grandparents or even know who they are or if they exist (Quinn 1991, B2). In addition, television and computer games dictate children's lives, leaving less and less time for them to communicate with family and friends (Quinn 1991, B2).

General Information on Genealogy

Genealogy is not a new phenomenon. In Genesis, the first book of the Bible, individuals can find the patriarchal names of Adam and many of his descendants. In the New Testament of the Bible, the first sixteen verses of Matthew, Chapter 1 are devoted to the ancestors of Jesus beginning with King David and ending 42 generations later. During the Middle Ages, genealogy was vital to proving the legitimacy of kings, barons, and other feudal chieftains. During the Industrial Revolution, especially in Britain, the emerging middle class became interested in genealogy. These individuals did genealogy in an attempt to prove their relations were distinguished persons of noble class. Many times, this led to genealogical fraud as individuals from lower social classes illegitimately declared themselves as descendants of noble blood and presented false documentation (Quinn 1991, B2).

Fulkerson (1995) reveals to readers the growing popularity of genealogy as a hobby. As mentioned before, genealogy is the third most popular hobby. Fulkerson (1995) mentions that approximately half of American adults are interested in their family history. Research results indicate that middle-aged individuals show the highest level of interest in genealogy. Adults with household incomes of at least $55,000 have the tendency to have intense enthusiasm for genealogy. Also, the most popular means of tracing family roots are the least expensive and least formal techniques. About 94 percent converse or correspond with relatives to discover information on family

members. Approximately 45 percent travel to their ancestral home or country (Fulkerson 1995, 44).

Collection Guidelines

In the Fall 1992 issue of *RQ*, an article discussing "Guidelines for Developing Beginning Genealogical Collections and Services" was published. These were guidelines set forth by the Genealogy Committee of the History Section of the Reference and Adult Services Division of the American Library Association. It discussed four aspects: collection development, services, personnel, and access. A genealogical collection should provide basic genealogical reference materials and how-to-do-genealogy books. Access to other genealogical research materials should be made available through interlibrary loan or referral. Reference service should include assisting and instructing researchers on all levels in any way possible. Collections should include vital records, census schedules, indexes, family histories, probates and wills, and land records as well as many other items. Reviews in library and genealogical journals should be used to select material for the collection. Individuals who work with family historians should be trained and kept up-to-date in genealogical research methods and sources. Also, they should be aware of other organizations which maintain collections. Genealogical materials should circulate unless they have high daily demand, are considered reference, or are rare items (ALA 1992, 31-32).

Craig R. Amason wrote an article giving helpful suggestions to those individuals in charge of a genealogical collection. It has been discovered that the most used federal

items include census records, military service and pension records, passenger lists and naturalization records, and land records (Amason 1988, 285). In addition, biographical works have proven useful to genealogists. Material such as letters, old newspapers, tax lists, and ships' passenger lists should be collected. He also notes the importance of organizing a system in which patrons have relatively easy access to the needed materials, and he encourages libraries to participate in interlibrary loan programs (Amason 1988, 286). Amason argues that it is important for the patron to be aware of materials and services offered by the library. It is essential to train staff members who will be assisting family researchers. The last items mentioned by Amason are the necessity of interviewing genealogists to uncover what the patron really wants and no matter the circumstances, to maintain a positive attitude when instructing or assisting researchers (Amason 1988, 293).

Services to Genealogists

In her article on strengthening collections, Jean Waggener, an employee at the Tennessee State Library and Archives in Nashville, gives a list of ten suggestions for improving genealogical service. Some suggestions include developing ties with local historical and genealogical societies, launching a campaign to build the local historical or genealogical collections, compiling a guide to the materials available in the collection, and preparing and maintaining a list of people in the community who will provide assistance to family historians (Waggener 1986, 21-22). In addition, she discusses microfilm resources available from the Tennessee State Library and Archives. Some of

these include county records, indexes to courthouse records, birth and death certificates and indexes to the certificates, Confederate pension applications, land grants and a land grant index, legislative petitions (e.g. divorce), and tax and marriage records (Waggener 1986, 22-23).

Sarah Meisels, the Library Director of the Wheaton Public Library in Wheaton, Illinois, provides some background information about the genealogical resources and services of the Wheaton Public Library in an article published in 1986. She gives nine suggestions to librarians developing genealogical collections and services. Among these nine suggestions include the following:

1. A basic genealogy collection is expensive and takes many years to achieve.

2. Staff needs to be knowledgeable of genealogy in order to begin or continue genealogical acquisitions and services.

3. Develop the collection first before applying for a grant. Make a regular funding commitment, and write a long-range plan for acquisitions to meet the objectives. Survey users and use these results in your plan.

4. Work diligently on interagency cooperation. Some agencies may include local genealogical societies, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Daughters of the American Colonists, the Mayflower Society, and local historical societies.

5. Organize the collection to enhance ease and effective use of the collection.

6. Compile bibliographical sheets or a subject guide to help publicize the genealogical collection.

7. Enter your genealogical titles in your local database and on OCLC, if the organization is a member. Location and availability of items are important to researchers.

8. Be cordial and helpful to out-of-town genealogists.

9. Evaluate your collection and services continuously (Meisels 1986, 256-257).

In 1991, Yvette Boling, a professional researcher, published an article which identified what she expects from a genealogical collection from a patron's point of view. She expects the library to be a relatively quiet place which houses books, magazines, newspapers, and vertical files. She wants to find the material with relative ease. Collections should contain card files or indexes to available material. Libraries need to provide adequate information on what can be found on microfilm. The material in the collection should be located in one place, microfilm equipment needs to be maintained better, and publication aids need to be updated more frequently and include more of the material available in the collection. Materials should be returned to their rightful place, and translation dictionaries would be a terrific help for those collections with materials printed in foreign languages. Individuals who are able to read old handwriting should be available to help family historians. Bibliographies of new titles added to the collection should be updated frequently as well.

In her article, Boling mentions several trouble areas. Lack of staff time or knowledge to inform patrons of services and materials available hinders public service, and although many libraries have volunteers, volunteers are not used to their fullest potential. Lack of good lighting in work areas (except microfilm rooms), lack of room

at tables, and security pose many concerns, too. Monitored access to collections and a single-level building are preferred accommodations (Boling 1991, 75-76).

Studies of Genealogical Collections

A survey was done by Russell Baker in the 1980s which explored the genealogical collections in Arkansas libraries. This survey revealed that the number of volumes in a collection varies among libraries. The largest collections in Arkansas range from 2,700 at Fayetteville to more than 5,500 volumes at Craighead County Library at Jonesboro. Collections may be visited by as few as ten individuals to more than 5,500 in a given year. One similarity which was pointed out by Baker (1986) was that the majority of the libraries surveyed have at least one microfilm reader and some microfilm. Also, most are interested in expanding their collections. In addition, Baker recommended that libraries should cooperate closely and communicate frequently with local genealogical interest groups. He further explained that the members of these groups can give great insight to individuals charged with developing and maintaining a genealogical collection. He continued his discussion with an introduction to four types of materials which are necessary when establishing a basic collection: (1) how-to books, (2) directories of historical and genealogical societies, (3) local and state history materials, and (4) maps. He gave bibliographic information on specific titles found under each category and stressed that genealogical collections should be centered around the needs and desires of the intended users of the collection.

In 1985, Wheaton Public Library in Wheaton, Illinois applied and received a grant in the amount of $4,670. The grant money was used to purchase additional Illinois county histories, to purchase state census indexes, and to publish a subject guide to the entire genealogical collection of the Wheaton Public Library (Meisels 1986, 254). To meet grant guidelines, the library conducted two user surveys, the results of which were used to compile a long list of titles believed to be heavily used. Users were asked to fill out a questionnaire covering such points as satisfaction with the collection as a whole, use of census indexes, use of Illinois county history sources in the collection, and whether or not the user was aware of and used a particular publication as a guide to the Wheaton Public Library's collection. Prior to the new titles appearing on the shelf and before the publication *Genealogical Holdings of the Wheaton Public Library: A Subject Guide*, 35 percent of the respondents were satisfied with the printed census indexes and thirteen of thirty-three respondents were satisfied with the Illinois County histories. Partial results of the second survey were given. After the new titles appeared on the shelf and the publication *of The Wheaton PL Subject Guide* had been completed, 67 percent of the respondents were satisfied with the printed census indexes and ten of sixteen were satisfied with the Illinois County histories. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents had used the publication (Meisels 1986, 258).

Yvette Boling (1991) surveyed Louisiana parish librarians. The questionnaire dealt with genealogical/historical material in their collections and how it has been handled. Response rate was 78 percent, or forty-nine libraries. Of the questionnaires

returned, 69 percent had staff members interested in genealogy. Fifty-nine percent circulated duplicated copies of genealogical sources; 24 percent had no census records or microfilm; 22 percent did not have newspapers on microfilm; 20 percent maintained a file of local information and contacts; 18 percent had card files of locally researched family names; and 18 percent maintained a written list of available genealogical research materials and/or suggestions on how to use facilities. Also, 88 percent of those libraries who participated in the survey have maintained vertical files.

Methodology

To substantiate the purpose of measuring user satisfaction, an article by George D'Elia and Sandra Walsh was consulted. In the article, the authors described three uses for user satisfaction studies. They can be used to measure a library's performance level and as a comparison tool among libraries. They can be used to determine the strengths and weaknesses of a library's services. Finally, they give some idea to researchers on how users may behave toward the library in the future (D'Elia and Walsh 1983, 114). In addition, D'Elia's and Walsh's article gave some ideas on what should be measured when determining a user's satisfaction level. When evaluating services provided by a library, the researcher should take a look at the following aspects: availability of the collections, physical facilities, library staff, and convenience of hours. When measuring library use, the researcher should include questions in regards to frequency of visits, services used, circulation of materials, and duration of visit. In addition, the individual

or group of individuals who are doing the survey may look at some demographic information (e.g. gender, age, and education); how important the library is, whether the patron uses material in-house or borrows material; and if the respondent uses the library for leisure and recreation or for educational purposes (D'Elia and Walsh 1983, 117-119). The majority of these can be measured using Likert scales.

According to Emma Robinson, the University Librarian at the University of London Library, the customer provides organizations with useful information and therefore, should be tapped as a source for information. The customer's perceptions and view on services and materials can be used to maintain and build services to higher standards. In addition, quantitative data is necessary to prove to administration that the services provided to customers are worthwhile and should be continued. These statistical data can be made available through well-done surveys, which measure user satisfaction. Finally, user satisfaction studies can assist in strategic planning. Library management must determine which services are valued and which are not, must identify where different perceptions originate, and must contrast the perceptions of the users with the providers. Management must choose where valuable resources would best be targeted and determine where change is most welcome (Robinson 1995, 180-181).

Summary

Genealogical collections should provide vital records, census schedules, indexes, family histories, probates and wills, land records, county records, military service and pension records, passenger lists and naturalization records, biographical works, letters,

old newspapers, tax lists, birth records, death records, and marriage records. In addition, how-to books, directories of historical and genealogical societies, and maps should be included. Translation dictionaries would be beneficial. These records could be held in a variety of formats, including monographs, magazines, newspapers, CD-ROMs, and microfilm. Access to the Internet would be a great asset.

Microfilm equipment should be maintained and be located near the genealogical collection. Also, individuals responsible for collections need to inform their users of what information can be found on microfilm and keep them posted on new acquisitions to the collection. Collections should participate in interlibrary loan programs.

Staff members do not seem to receive proper training for assisting family historians. Also, there is a shortage of available educated staff members. To compensate for this shortage, collections have volunteers. Unfortunately, these volunteers are not used to their fullest potential. Whether collections use volunteers or paid staff members, anyone assisting the researcher needs to maintain a positive attitude and should be cordial and helpful to the researcher.

Individuals responsible for genealogical collections need to develop and maintain ties with local historical and genealogical societies. The collection should be organized in such a way as to enhance the ease and effective use of the collection. A guide should be designed to facilitate the ease of use of the collection. Items in the collection should be entered on the online catalog, or at least a card catalog. The collection should continuously be evaluated.

# CHAPTER 3
# METHODOLOGY

## Research Methodology

The 1996 membership roster of the Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society was used to compile a mailing list. Questionnaires were mailed to these individuals in the roster and were self-administered. Although there were 223 names on the list, only 221 were mailed a survey. One known member has deceased since the roster's publication, and the researcher, who is also a member, did not participate in the survey. The respondents were asked to base their satisfaction on the genealogical collection used most by the individual. The results of the survey are available to respondents upon request.

To prevent individuals not familiar with seeking information on ancestors in a genealogical collection from completing the survey, the first question served as a screening question. If the individual had never sought family information in genealogical collections, he was instructed to go directly to the demographic questions. If the individual had sought ancestral information in a collection, he was prompted to complete the questionnaire.

## Criteria

Many criteria can be assessed to measure user satisfaction. Some points of interest include the variety of formats the information is available in, the number of different and useful sources, the ability of the collection to deliver necessary items through interlibrary loans, and how easily accessible the items are in the genealogical

collection. Hours of operation; availability of trained staff and quality of staff service; and access to public copy machines, personal computers, and microfilm readers will be explored as well.

Limitations of the Study

The sample size was relatively small and centered around only one organization. This makes it difficult to generalize the results to the United States. In addition, those individuals who are not members of the Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society and who do conduct family research did not have the opportunity to evaluate genealogical collections in this study.

Many researchers of genealogy use more than one genealogical collection to do family research. Although researchers were encouraged to evaluate only the collection they use most frequently, interviewees evaluated more than one collection in the questionnaire. This was determined by the number of respondents who mentioned the differences among the collections they have used.

## CHAPTER 4
## ANALYSIS OF DATA

### Response Rate

Of the 221 surveys mailed, 52 percent, or 115 individuals, returned their questionnaires. Three individuals, or about three percent of those surveys returned, responded that they had not sought information on ancestors from a genealogical collection. Three questionnaires were returned in which the forwarding time had expired. These three questionnaires were not used in the study since they did not arrive at their destinations.

### Demographics

To gain a better understanding of the respondents, questions were asked in regards to age, employment, occupation, years of membership in the Ohio Genealogical Society, Summit County Chapter, and the years in which they have been researching family roots. Table 1 summarized the results for age, employment, and occupation. Table 2 summarizes the numbers of years the respondent was a member of the organization and how long he has been doing genealogical research.

According to the research done by Maritz Marketing Research in Fenton, Missouri (Fulkerson 1995, 46), older Americans are not as interested in genealogy as the middle-aged Americans. According to Maritz Marketing, 39 percent of those individuals between 18 to 24 are at least somewhat involved in genealogy; 46 percent are between 25 and 34; 47 percent are between 35 and 44; 50 percent are between 45 and 54; 50 percent are between 55 and 64; and 39 percent are at least 65 years (Fulkerson 1995, 46). The study of the members of the Summit

County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society revealed slightly different results. Middle-aged as well as older individuals are interested in genealogy.

Table 1

| AGE | | | EMPLOYMENT | | | OCCUPATION | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *no.* | % | | *no.* | % | | *no.* | % |
| Under 35 | 2 | 2 | Retired | 59 | 57 | Professional | 44 | 43 |
| 36-49 | 9 | 9 | Full-time | 27 | 26 | Manager/Proprietor | 12 | 12 |
| 50-70 | 59 | 57 | Part-time | 7 | 7 | Blue-Collared | 3 | 3 |
| 70+ | 33 | 32 | Unemployed | 7 | 7 | Clerical/Sales | 15 | 14 |
| | | | Other | 3 | 3 | Homemakers | 6 | 6 |
| | | | | | | Homemakers/Clerical | 9 | 9 |
| | | | | | | Two Occupations | 4 | 4 |
| | | | | | | Other | 10 | 10 |

Percentages may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

Everyone who completed the questionnaire was over the age of 25. Two percent were 35 years of age or younger; 9 percent were between the ages of 36 and 49; 57 percent were between the ages of 50 and 0; and 32 percent were over 70. These percentages indicate that research of ancestors is not done by many individuals under the age of 50. This could be the result of time constraints held by the younger population.

In the Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society, 57 percent of the respondents were retired. An additional 7 percent indicated they were unemployed. Five of these seven respondents were homemakers. Two percent indicated they work part-time although they are retired. Seven percent work part-time, and one percent said they work as a volunteer. Also, the results indicated that 26 percent of the members of the chapter work full-time. Given the time required to do genealogical research, it is interesting that this many individuals who

work full-time do research. This indicates that if there is a willingness or a need to trace family ancestors, individuals will find the time to do the research.

Genealogy is a time consuming hobby. Researchers spend years solving family mysteries and discovering family histories (Table 2). Almost 29 percent of the respondents have been researching family roots for more than 20 years; 25 percent have done research for 11 to 20 years; 22 percent have traced their ancestry for 6 to 10 years; and 24 percent have done genealogical research for 1 to 5 years. All of the respondents have researched their families at least one year.

It is common knowledge that the longer one researches family roots, the more familiar the individual becomes with which sources have become essential to finding missing information, which sources are less valuable as a means of solving family mysteries, and how to use the sources available. If they have visited several genealogical collections, they become familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of each collection and will have the tendency to visit those collections which most benefit their research needs. For those individuals who have actively researched for at least 11 years, one can assume that they have tapped several sources and have become proficient in their use. They recognize the valuable sources and can distinguish the less useful sources from the most useful. In addition, these researchers know the best way to pursue family research. In many cases, these experienced researchers could be described as experts in the study of genealogy.

Table 2

| YEARS OF RESEARCH | | | YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *no.* | % | | *no.* | % |
| 20+ | 30 | 29 | 20+ | 7 | 7 |
| 11-20 | 26 | 25 | 11-20 | 13 | 13 |
| 6-10 | 23 | 22 | 6-10 | 32 | 31 |
| 1-5 | 25 | 24 | 1-5 | 50 | 48 |
| Less Than 1 | 0 | 0 | Less Than 1 | 2 | 2 |

Percentages may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

Seven percent of the respondents have been a member of the Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical society for more than twenty years (Table 3). The data are inconclusive to determine what percent of these respondents have been with the organization since its chartering almost 27 years ago. Thirteen percent of the respondents have been a member 11 to 20 years. Thirty-one percent have been a member 6 to 10 years, and 48 percent have been a member for 1 to 5 years. Less than 2 percent of the respondents have been a member of the organization for less than one year. These statistics indicate that the Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society has a future. Twenty percent of the current members have at least 11 years experience belonging to the organization. These individuals are available to pass down to the other 80 percent of the members their expertise in operating a thriving organization. The transition will be smoother since newcomers do not have to start from scratch. Current and former members have established a firm foundation to build on and will be available for consultation.

One may wonder if there is a correlation between the years that an individual has researched his ancestry to the number of years an individual has been a member of a chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society. There is no definite pattern, though, it appears several small

patterns may exist. Table 3 summarizes the data available comparing the years a family historian does research to the number of years he has been a member of the organization.

Table 3

| MEMBERSHIP YEARS WITH RESEARCH YEARS | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Research Years/ Membership Years* | *1-5 years (%)* | | *6-10 years (%)* | | *11-20 years (%)* | | *20+ years (%)* | |
| | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* |
| Less than 1 year | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 1-5 years | 24 | 48 | 13 | 26 | 8 | 16 | 5 | 10 |
| 6-10 years | 1 | 3 | 10 | 31 | 10 | 31 | 11 | 34 |
| 11-20 years | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 46 | 7 | 54 |
| 20+ years | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 100 |

Percentages may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

The available data indicates that about one half of the family researchers join a chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society within the first few years of doing research. For those individuals who have been a member 1 to 5 years, 48 percent have researched 1 to 5 years. Thirty-one percent of those who have been a member for 6 to 10 years have been a member fro 6 to 10 years. For those respondents who have been a member for 11 to 20 years, 46 percent have researched 11 to 20 years. These data indicate that many researchers join genealogical organizations when they first become interested in family research and remain a member throughout their years of researching.

Previous research done by Maritz Marketing Research in Fenton, Missouri (Fulkerson 1995, 45) indicated that low-income households have the least interest in genealogy whereas affluent adults are most likely to be involved in genealogy. According to this organization's research, 27 percent of adults earning less than $15,000 are at least somewhat involved in

genealogy; 51 percent of adults earning between $15,000 and $24,999 are at least somewhat involved in researching family roots; 46 percent make between $25,000 and $34,999; 50 percent earn between $35,000 and $44,999; 57 percent earn between $45,000 and $54,999; and 52 percent of adults earning at least $55,000 are at least somewhat involved in researching ancestors. This study completed by Maritz Marketing Research (Fulkerson 1995, 45) indicates that a large percentage of individuals interested in genealogy can be considered to be middle to upper class citizens in the United States. The study which evaluated the members of the Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society revealed similar conclusions (Table 4).

The questionnaire mailed to the members of the Ohio Genealogical Society, Summit County Chapter did not ask for income. However, by using the data available from the Federal Government, an estimated guess was made to determine the approximate income levels of respondents. Table 4 summarizes these results.

Table 4

| OCCUPATION WITH EARNINGS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Occupation* | *no.* | *%* | *Earnings ($)* |
| Professional | 44 | 43 | 32,032 - 44,304 |
| Manager/Proprietor | 12 | 12 | 32,032 - 44,304 |
| Blue-Collar | 3 | 3 | 15,964 - 29,120 |
| Clerical/Sales | 15 | 15 | 18,356 - 30,628 |
| Homemaker/Clerical | 9 | 9 | 18,356 - 30,628 |
| Homemaker | 6 | 6 | –0– |
| Two Occupations | 4 | 4 | –0– |
| Other | 10 | 10 | –0– |

Percentages may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

Forty-three percent of the respondents indicated that they worked or currently work in a professional field such as teaching, engineering, or accounting (Table 1). Twelve percent were a manager or proprietor. In 1996, the managerial and professional male had median weekly earnings $852 or annual earnings of $44,304. The female manager and professional had median weekly earnings $616 or annual earnings of $32,032 (U.S. Department of Commerce 1997, 431). Fifteen percent indicated they did clerical work or held a job in sales. In 1996, males who worked in sales had median weekly earnings of $589 or $30,628 annually; females earned $353 or $18,356 annually. In 1996, males working in administrative support including clerical earned $489 a week or $25,428 a year; females earned $391 a week or $20,432 a year (U.S. Department of Commerce 1997, 431). Given these annual earnings and the statistics compiled from the study, it can be concluded that many of the members of the Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society who actively research family roots are members of the middle class. James G. Youmans, who is affiliated with the University of Alabama, Center for Business and Economic Research, stated in an article that by using the annual household after-tax income in 1996 dollars, most studies agree that the U.S. middle class falls in the range of $21,300 to $63,300. This income includes all sources of income, including wages, Social Security, and food stamps. However, using a broader definition of middle class, household income of the middle class ranges from $18,000 to $55,000 (http://www.cba.ua.edu/?cber/middle2.html). At least 70 percent of the respondents fall into this category. Three percent of the respondents indicated they were blue-collar workers. Depending on their job classification, many of these respondents may fall in the middle class. Those individuals employed in precision production, including mechanics, repairers, construction workers, etc., could earn $19,396 to $29,120

annually. Those blue-collar workers considered to be operators, fabricators, and laborers could earn $15,964 to $21,944 per year (U.S. Department of Commerce 1997, 431). Other respondents indicated their occupations were a telephone operator, corrections officer, newspaper editor, LPN, Savings and Loan executive, professional sales executive, and a nonprofessional genealogist. With the exception of the nonprofessional genealogist, these respondents could be classified as middle class. Nine percent indicated they were a homemaker and worked in another occupation, usually as a clerk or in sales. Less than 4 percent marked two other categories which varied with each respondent.

The Use of the Genealogical Collection

The data revealed that the ease of use of the collection, the availability of staff members, and the knowledgeability of the staff has an effect on the usage of the collection. Tables 5-7 summarize these results. Parking limitations and convenience of the hours in which the collection was open were not explored in this study.

Table 5

**STAFF AVAILABILITY COMPARED WITH USE**

| *Use/Staff Availability* | *1-3 times* | | *4-6 times* | | *7-10 times* | | *more than 10 times* | | *did not use* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* |
| Excellent | 5 | 28 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 29 | 15 | 38 | 1 | 20 |
| Good | 9 | 50 | 19 | 79 | 6 | 43 | 17 | 43 | 4 | 80 |
| Poor | 3 | 17 | 3 | 13 | 4 | 29 | 8 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Does not exist | 1 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Percentages may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

Staff availability is a determining factor in the number of times individuals use a genealogical collection. For those respondents who indicated they use the collection more than

10 times during the past year, 43 percent said it was good and 38 percent said the availability of staff was excellent. For those respondents who used the collection 7 to 10 times, 42 percent said it was good and 29 percent said it was excellent. Looking at the respondents who indicated they used the collection 4 to 6 times during the past year, 79 percent said it was good; and only 8 percent said it was excellent. We clearly see that heavier use occurs with those collections which have excellent staff availability.

Table 6

**STAFF KNOWLEDGEABILITY COMPARED WITH USE**

| *Use/ Staff Knowledge* | *1-3 times* | | *4-6 times* | | *7-10 times* | | *more than 10 times* | | *did not know* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* |
| Very knowledgeable | 9 | 47 | 7 | 29 | 7 | 50 | 22 | 55 | 3 | 60 |
| Somewhat knowledgeable | 8 | 42 | 14 | 58 | 7 | 50 | 14 | 35 | 2 | 40 |
| Not very knowledgeable | 1 | 5 | 3 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Not knowledgeable at all | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Does not exist | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Percentages may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

How knowledgeable staff members are does play an important role in how frequently family researchers use a genealogical collection. None of the respondents indicated that staff was completely ignorant of genealogy. The respondents who have used the collection more than 10 times indicated that overall, the staff was knowledgeable. Only 10 percent said that the staff was not very knowledgeable. Thirty-five percent said the staff was somewhat knowledgeable and 55 percent indicated the staff was very knowledgeable. Half of the respondents who had used the collection 7 to 10 times indicated that the staff was very knowledgeable and the other half indicated that the staff was somewhat knowledgeable. In comparison, only 29 percent of

the respondents who used the collection 4 to 6 times indicated the staff was very knowledgeable and 58 percent said the staff was somewhat knowledgeable. The trend seems to indicate that researchers will use the collection more frequently if the staff is very or has some knowledge about genealogy.

Table 7

**OVERALL SATISFACTION COMPARED WITH USE**

| *Use/Overall Satisfaction* | *1-3 times* | | *4-6 times* | | *7-10 times* | | *more than 10 times* | | *did not know* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* |
| Very satisfied | 11 | 58 | 6 | 27 | 7 | 50 | 22 | 54 | 2 | 40 |
| Somewhat satisfied | 6 | 32 | 15 | 68 | 7 | 50 | 16 | 39 | 2 | 40 |
| Not very satisfied | 2 | 11 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 20 |
| Not satisfied at all | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Percentages may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

Overall satisfaction of the services provided by the genealogical collection does play a role in the number of times the researcher uses the collection. Each respondent who used a collection had some level of satisfaction with the collection. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents who used the collection more than 10 times indicated they were somewhat satisfied and 54 percent said they were very satisfied with the collection. Half of the respondents who used the collection 7 to 10 times said they were somewhat satisfied while the other half indicated they were very satisfied with the collection. These percentages indicate that if users are more satisfied with the collection, they will use it more often.

Table 8 shows the breakdown of how many times respondents used the collection in the past 12 months from the time they completed the questionnaire. The highest percentage of individuals used the collection more than 10 times.

Table 8

| USE OF COLLECTION IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *no.* | % |
| More Than 10 Times | 42 | 39 |
| 7-10 | 14 | 13 |
| 4-6 | 24 | 22 |
| 1-3 | 20 | 18 |
| Did Not Use | 9 | 8 |

The members of the Ohio Genealogical Society, Summit County Chapter are probably average users of genealogical collections. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents used the genealogical collection more than 10 times in the past 12 months; 13 percent used it 7 to 10 times; and 22 percent used it four to six times. These numbers indicate that 74 percent of the respondents use genealogical collections once a month or bimonthly, on average. No data are available to compare the use of collections by the members of the Summit County Chapter to the use of collections by other family researchers. However, if one was to guess how frequently the active researcher uses a collection, the educated guess would be one to two times a month. Visiting a collection monthly would give individuals the opportunity to enjoy other interests and to perform daily activities. In addition, by visiting a collection once or twice a month or bimonthly, this gives the researcher time to organize the information gathered during the previous visit and to plan for the next visit.

Eighteen percent used the genealogical collection only 1 to 3 times during the past year. These respondents indicated they were unable to research as much as they would have liked because obligations came up which demanded their continual attention. However, these

individuals also indicated an interest in renewing their research activities in the near future. The remaining 8 percent had not used the collection in the past 12 months. These individuals who had not recently used the collection may no longer be active researchers or they may have been active researchers who just have not used the collection for various reasons. The inactive researchers may no longer be active for several reasons: (1) health has deteriorated, making it difficult to continue researching family roots; (2) computers have turned several former researchers away from their research; (3) family obligations and other interests take much of the researcher's time, thus limiting the amount of time they have to spend on genealogical research; (4) researchers are getting older, making it more difficult to get to and from places, therefore, they are limited to doing research by mail and through interlibrary loan services; or (5) research is frustrating: individuals reach a stumbling block and cannot continue. The active researchers may have been organizing the information they had collected, may have been corresponding with relatives trying to locate missing information, or may have visited several cemeteries looking for additional information. There could be many other possible explanations.

How easy the collection is to use plays a role in how frequently a researcher uses the collection. Table 9 summarizes the data comparing the ease of use of the collection with the number of times the respondents used the collection. The response base varied for each analysis. The respondent must have answered both questions in regards to how easy the collection was to use and how many times they had used the collection in the past 12 months to be included in this analysis.

Table 9

| EASE OF USE WITH USE OF THE COLLECTION | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Use/Grade* | *1-3 times* | | *4-6 times* | | *7-10 times* | | *More than 10 times* | | *Did not use collection* | |
| | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* |
| A = excellent | 5 | 28 | 3 | 15 | 3 | 23 | 15 | 39 | 1 | 20 |
| B = good | 6 | 33 | 10 | 50 | 7 | 54 | 13 | 34 | 1 | 20 |
| C = average | 7 | 39 | 6 | 30 | 2 | 15 | 8 | 21 | 2 | 40 |
| D = below average | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 20 |
| F = poor | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |

Percentages may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

The data in Table 9 reveal that users will visit genealogical collections more frequently if they believe the collection is good or excellent. Fifteen percent of the respondents who used the collection 4 to 6 times believed the collection to be excellent and 50 percent thought the collection to be good. Twenty-three percent of the respondents who used the collection 7 to 10 times believed the collection to be excellent while 54 percent rated the collection as good. Thirty-nine percent who have used the collection more than 10 times said the collection was excellent; 34 percent indicated the collection was good. Those collections which are considered average or below average to use are not used as much by researchers. Thirty-nine percent who used the collection 1 to 3 times considered the collection to be average. Thirty-five percent who used the collection 4 to 6 times considered the collection average or below average. When the respondents used the collection 7 to 10 times, 23 percent indicated the collection was average or below average.

Availability of Material

Table 10 illustrates the availability of material in the collections evaluated by the members of the Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society. The types of material are listed in order according to the most popular type of material to the least popular.

Table 10

| AVAILABILITY OF MATERIAL | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Type of Material** | **Number of Respondents** | **Percentage of Respondents** |
| Census Records/Indexes | 98 | 85 |
| Cemetery Records | 91 | 79 |
| County, State, Province, or Country Histories | 87 | 76 |
| Published Family Histories | 84 | 73 |
| Maps/Atlases | 80 | 70 |
| Biographical Sources | 79 | 69 |
| County Records | 77 | 67 |
| Newspaper Articles/ Obituaries | 77 | 67 |
| Directories | 76 | 66 |
| Marriage Records | 75 | 65 |
| Birth Records | 69 | 60 |
| Death Records | 69 | 60 |
| Newsletters | 68 | 59 |
| Military Records/Rosters | 64 | 56 |
| Periodicals | 64 | 56 |
| CD-ROMs/Electronic Sources | 56 | 49 |
| Family Group Sheets | 54 | 47 |
| Tax Records | 41 | 36 |
| Family Bible Records | 38 | 33 |
| Land Deeds | 36 | 31 |
| Diaries/Personal Letters | 29 | 25 |

| AVAILABILITY OF MATERIAL | | |
|---|---|---|
| Internet/E-Mail | 28 | 24 |
| Other | 9 | 8 |

The top five sources available in genealogical collections were (1) census records/indexes; (2) cemetery records; (3) county, state, province, or country histories; (4) published family histories; and (5) maps/atlases. The least available items appear to be the Internet/E-mail and diaries/personal letters. Many genealogical collections do not appear to provide Internet or E-mail access to the public. When researchers use the Internet or E-mail to obtain family information, one can speculate that they own a personal computer with Internet access or they use a family member's or relative's personal computer. Other researchers may gain access to the Internet or E-mail through their local public library. In addition, one can speculate with the growing popularity of E-mail, many businesses offer this means of communication to their employees. Diaries and personal letters are very seldom found in genealogical collections since they are private sources and usually kept within families.

Only nine respondents gave an additional category. The other categories included the following: (1) 5 generation charts; (2) foreign language materials; (3) passenger lists; (4) wills (extracts); (5) church records and histories; (6) vertical files; (7) surname indexes; and (8) social security data. Two respondents listed church records and histories as an additional source used to find information. From the literature review, it is known that probates and wills, passenger lists, and vertical files should be included in collections. Church records and histories, generation charts, foreign language materials, surname indexes, and social security data were not among the items listed in the literature review.

Satisfaction with Available Materials

The majority of the respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied with the items available in the genealogical collection they evaluated. Table 11 shows the break down of the satisfaction level of each of the items evaluated.

Table 11

| SATISFACTION WITH AVAILABLE MATERIALS | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Type of Material* | *Very Satisfied* | | *Satisfied* | | *Not Satisfied* | |
| | *no.* | % | *no.* | % | *no.* | % |
| Biographical Sources | 20 | 26 | 48 | 63 | 8 | 11 |
| Birth Records | 28 | 41 | 28 | 41 | 12 | 18 |
| CD-ROMs/Electronic Resources | 10 | 20 | 28 | 57 | 11 | 22 |
| Cemetery Records | 37 | 44 | 40 | 47 | 8 | 9 |
| Census Records/Indexes | 52 | 56 | 33 | 35 | 8 | 9 |
| County Records | 22 | 31 | 41 | 57 | 9 | 13 |
| County, State, Province, or Country Histories | 29 | 35 | 45 | 54 | 9 | 11 |
| Death Records | 36 | 52 | 22 | 32 | 11 | 16 |
| Diaries/Personal Letters | 8 | 31 | 14 | 54 | 4 | 15 |
| Directories | 34 | 47 | 30 | 42 | 8 | 11 |
| Family Bible Records | 10 | 29 | 17 | 50 | 7 | 21 |
| Family Group Sheets | 16 | 32 | 26 | 52 | 8 | 16 |
| Internet/E-mail | 5 | 21 | 11 | 46 | 8 | 33 |
| Land Deeds | 13 | 37 | 16 | 45 | 6 | 17 |
| Maps/Atlases | 21 | 28 | 46 | 61 | 9 | 12 |
| Marriage Records | 38 | 52 | 23 | 32 | 12 | 16 |
| Military Records/Rosters | 25 | 40 | 32 | 52 | 5 | 8 |
| Newsletters | 18 | 29 | 40 | 65 | 4 | 6 |
| Newspaper Articles/ Obituaries | 27 | 38 | 39 | 54 | 6 | 8 |

| SATISFACTION WITH AVAILABLE MATERIALS | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Periodicals | 9 | 16 | 40 | 73 | 6 | 11 |
| Published Family Histories | 25 | 32 | 41 | 53 | 12 | 15 |
| Tax Records | 12 | 31 | 21 | 54 | 6 | 15 |

On average, 35 percent of the individuals were very satisfied with the available items, 51 percent of the individuals were satisfied with the available items, and 14 percent were not satisfied with the available items. These percentages indicate that the members of the Ohio Genealogical Society, Summit County Chapter were satisfied with the available items in the collections.

Members of the Ohio Genealogical Society, Summit County Chapter indicated they were most satisfied with newsletters. Ninety-four percent said they were either very satisfied or satisfied with this material. These newsletters usually include searching hints, queries, and much more, depending on each chapter. The Summit County Chapter's newsletter, "The Highpoint," includes a President's Column, the minutes from the most recent meeting, new acquisitions of the Akron-Summit County Public Library genealogical collection, publications available for sale, queries, and helpful information which varies each month.

The second type of material that respondents were most satisfied with was newspaper articles/obituaries. Ninety-two percent said they were very satisfied or satisfied with newspaper articles/obituaries. This does not come as a surprise. Newspapers are a key source to current information, in respect to the date of the newspaper. Articles are featured on significant events or individuals occurring on a local level. In addition, obituaries are a gold mine to some

researchers. These include date of birth; place of birth; names of family members, sometimes including relation to the deceased individual; date of death; place of death; place of burial; and sometimes the cause of death. Many times, obituaries give the residence of surviving parties. Each piece of information can be used as clues on where to search next for additional information.

The third most satisfying material was military records/rosters. Similar to newspaper articles/obituaries, 92 percent of those respondents who chose to indicate satisfaction level were very satisfied or satisfied with the military records/rosters. Military records/rosters are the best sources for finding information on ancestors who have served in the military. These indicate which branch of the military ancestors were in, if they obtained a rank, which war(s) they fought in, and if they were wounded, killed, or taken prisoner in the specified war(s). In addition, military service records contained information on when and where the individual joined, served, and was discharged. Military pension records contain information on an individual's service history, vital statistics, family relationships, parents' names, wife's maiden name, or children's names (Croom 1995, 68).

Ninety-one percent of the respondents indicated they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the census records/ indexes. This is the fourth most satisfying type of material. The high percentage of satisfaction may be the result that census records/indexes are compiled by the government. Although many records may not be legible and contain inaccurate name spellings, family researchers have come to expect these problems and have learned to adjust to these flaws. For this reason, it is recommended by professional genealogists to verify information in at least two other sources.

Ninety-one percent of the respondents indicated they were either very satisfied or satisfied with cemetery records. Many of the cemetery records available in genealogical collections include a listing of individuals buried in the particular cemetery. Some have duplicated the information as written on the tombstones. This information may include dates, birthplaces, husbands' and wives' names, maiden names, parents' names, evidence of children who died young, and military service (Croom 1995, 46).

The respondents were least satisfied with the Internet/E-mail. Sixty-seven percent said they were very satisfied or satisfied with the service; 33 percent said they were not satisfied. These numbers can be misleading. The Internet and E-mail are relatively new sources of information. These services are not provided by many genealogical collections. However, many of the respondents may have their own personal computer with Internet and E-mail capabilities. If the respondents were asked about the Internet and E-mail in more general terms, not limiting them to evaluating the genealogical collection only, then the results would probably be different. Additional research would be necessary.

CD-ROMs and electronic resources were the second types of materials which members of the Ohio Genealogical Society, Summit County Chapter were least satisfied. Seventy-seven percent said they were at least satisfied with the material. The reasons for this low percentage could be similar to the Internet/E-mail. Genealogical information on CD-ROMs and other electronic resources is a fairly new trend. Not every collection has these types of materials available to its users. As the newness of them wear off and individuals responsible for the genealogical collection realize the value of having records available on CD-ROM or providing

access to the online catalogs of other collections, the popularity of CD-ROMs and electronic resources will grow.

Seventy-nine percent of the respondents indicated they were at least satisfied with family Bible records available in the collection. Only 33 percent of the respondents mentioned that these records were available in the collection. These have the tendency to provide information on one family line, and the amount of information given in the record varies from family Bible to family Bible. Such information as birth, marriage, and death dates and places are provided as well as other important pieces of information with value to the family historian. For those individuals who should locate a complete family Bible on their family, they have discovered a gold mine. However, for the general users, a family Bible would not benefit them greatly.

Of the more traditional sources of information found in genealogical collections, birth records ranked lowest. Eighty-two percent of the respondents said they were very satisfied or satisfied, leaving 18 percent to say they were not satisfied. Birth records may include such information as the child's name, birth date and place, and the parents' names. Additional information could be found on the birth certificate, which can be obtained from courthouse records.

Land deeds did not project much satisfaction. Eighty-two percent of the members of the Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society said they were very satisfied or satisfied; 17 percent said they were not satisfied. Land deeds may include such information as the name of the land owner's wife and may indicate if dower rights were granted. Also, the number of acres involved with the transaction, year of the transaction, and where the land was located at the time of the transaction may be included (Croom 1989, 88).

It appears that genealogists prefer items which give a lot of information. The top five sources have the tendency to provide more information than the bottom five sources. Newsletters give a variety of information, as does newspaper articles and obituaries. Military records and rosters include an abundance of information pertaining to individuals who have been a part of the armed forces. Census records provide invaluable information about families. Some census records are more valuable than others, depending on the year of the census. Birth records and land deeds, though providers of valuable information, offer less information than the previously mentioned sources.

Importance of Types of Materials

Most of the types of materials evaluated by respondents of the Ohio Genealogical Society, Summit County Chapter were considered to be very important or important, even when these materials were not available in the genealogical collection. Table 12 shows a breakdown of the number of respondents and how they evaluated the level of importance of each of the given types of materials. It divides the data into available, unavailable, and total materials for each level of importance: very important, important, and not important. Table 13 reports these data by descending order of importance. The percentages in column two of table 13 are the summation of the total material that is very important (TVI) and the total material that is important (TI).

Table 12

| IMPORTANCE OF MATERIALS | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Type of Material* | *AVI na/%* | *UVI na/%* | *TVI na/%* | *AI na/%* | *UI na/%* | *TI na/%* | *ANI na/%* | *UNI na/%* | *TNI na/%* |
| Biographical Sources | 26/39 | 2/3 | 28/42 | 24/36 | 3/4 | 27/40 | 12/18 | 0/0 | 12/18 |
| Birth Records | 45/59 | 16/21 | 61/80 | 7/9 | 2/3 | 9/12 | 5/7 | 1/1 | 6/8 |

| IMPORTANCE OF MATERIALS | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CD-ROMs/Electronic Sources | 20/32 | 6/10 | 26/42 | 16/26 | 4/6 | 20/32 | 10/16 | 6/10 | 16/26 |
| Cemetery Records | 51/62 | 6/7 | 57/69 | 19/23 | 2/2 | 21/25 | 4/5 | 0/0 | 4/5 |
| Census Records/Indexes | 63/79 | 1/1 | 64/80 | 10/13 | 1/1 | 11/14 | 5/6 | 0/0 | 5/6 |
| County Records | 38/50 | 10/13 | 48/63 | 19/25 | 4/5 | 23/30 | 5/7 | 0/0 | 5/7 |
| County, State, Province, or Country Histories | 34/41 | 3/4 | 37/45 | 33/40 | 5/6 | 38/46 | 6/7 | 1/1 | 7/8 |
| Death Records | 48/62 | 18/23 | 66/85 | 5/6 | 2/3 | 7/9 | 4/5 | 0/0 | 4/5 |
| Diaries/Personal Letters | 11/16 | 6/9 | 17/25 | 12/18 | 20/30 | 32/48 | 6/9 | 12/18 | 18/27 |
| Directories | 29/41 | 4/6 | 33/47 | 25/35 | 4/6 | 29/41 | 6/8 | 3/4 | 9/12 |
| Family Bible Records | 20/30 | 10/15 | 30/45 | 10/15 | 14/21 | 24/36 | 5/8 | 7/11 | 12/19 |
| Family Group Sheets | 19/27 | 11/15 | 30/42 | 21/30 | 10/14 | 31/44 | 7/10 | 3/4 | 10/14 |
| Internet/E-mail | 8/14 | 10/18 | 18/32 | 9/16 | 13/23 | 22/39 | 10/18 | 6/11 | 16/29 |
| Land Deeds | 16/24 | 28/42 | 44/66 | 12/18 | 5/8 | 17/26 | 1/2 | 4/6 | 5/8 |
| Maps/Atlases | 26/36 | 2/3 | 28/39 | 34/47 | 6/8 | 40/55 | 4/5 | 1/1 | 5/6 |
| Marriage Records | 51/67 | 12/16 | 63/83 | 7/9 | 0/0 | 7/9 | 6/8 | 0/0 | 6/8 |
| Military Records/Rosters | 31/44 | 9/13 | 40/57 | 14/20 | 8/11 | 22/31 | 7/10 | 1/1 | 8/11 |
| Newsletters | 14/20 | 1/1 | 15/21 | 30/43 | 7/10 | 37/53 | 11/16 | 6/9 | 17/25 |
| Newspaper Articles/Obituaries | 33/43 | 8/10 | 41/53 | 27/35 | 5/6 | 32/41 | 3/4 | 1/1 | 4/5 |
| Periodicals | 13/19 | 1/1 | 14/20 | 28/41 | 11/16 | 39/57 | 10/15 | 5/7 | 15/22 |
| Published Family Histories | 31/42 | 5/7 | 36/49 | 27/36 | 2/3 | 29/39 | 9/12 | 0/0 | 9/12 |
| Tax Records | 19/29 | 17/26 | 36/55 | 13/20 | 11/17 | 24/37 | 2/3 | 3/5 | 5/8 |

AVI = available material that is very important
UVI = unavailable material that is very important
TVI = total material that is very important

ANI = available material that is not important
UNI = unavailable material that is not important
TNI = total material that is not important

AI = available material that is important
UI = unavailable material that is important
TI = total material that is important

In regards to available material in genealogical collections, 79 percent of the respondents indicated that census records and indexes were very important. Marriage records lagged behind by 12 percentage points as the second most important type of material that was available in

collections. Cemetery and death records followed marriage records with 62 percent of the respondents indicating these available materials were very important. These sources of information should be in the genealogical collection.

Land deeds are considered to be valuable sources for information by the respondents. However, these have a tendency to not appear in genealogical collections. Forty-two percent of the respondents indicated this type of material was unavailable in the collection but was considered to be very important. Tax records (26%), death records (23%), and birth records (21%) appear to be other valuable sources of family information that are not available in collections. If land deeds and tax, death, and birth records become available to individuals responsible for the development of the genealogical collection, these individuals should consider adding these items to the collection.

Next, maps/atlases that are available in collections are considered important. Forty-seven percent of the respondents indicated this type of material's importance. Maps and atlases were followed closely by newsletters at 43 percent; periodicals at 41 percent; and county, state, province, or country histories at 40 percent. For those items not available in the collection, diaries and personal letters were considered by 30 percent of the respondents to be important. This percent was followed by the Internet/E-mail at 23 percent and family Bible records at 21 percent. Maps/atlases; newsletters; periodicals; and county, state, province, or country histories should not be eliminated from the collection. Diaries/personal letters and family Bible records, though considered to be important by the respondents, should be evaluated on a one-on-one basis before adding to the collection. These are usually more personal and will not provide a lot of assistance to most users of the collection. Internet and E-mail, though thought to be important to

only 23 percent of the respondents, has the potential to become a great service in the collection as its popularity continues to grow among genealogists.

Although biographical sources and the Internet/E-mail were among the resources provided in the collection, 18 percent of the respondents believed each to have little importance. Sixteen percent indicated that CD-ROMs/electronic sources and newsletters were not important although they were offered as part of the collection. Periodicals followed closely behind with 15 percent of the respondents stating they were unimportant in their research. Of the unavailable items, diaries/personal letters (18%), family Bible records (11%), the Internet/E-mail (11%), CD-ROMs/electronic sources (10%), and newsletters (9%) were considered not to be important. These data support the decision to consider seriously personal material before adding it to a collection used by many individuals. However, technology should not be eliminated since it is relatively new. Newsletters should remain in the collection since they do have some value to researchers and do not take a substantial amount of space.

Table 13

| IMPORTANCE VS. NO IMPORTANCE | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Type of Material** | **Very Important/Important (%)** | **No Importance (%)** | **Total No. of Respondents** |
| Cemetery Records | 94 | 5 | 82 |
| Death Records | 94 | 5 | 77 |
| Newspaper Articles/Obituaries | 94 | 5 | 77 |
| Census Records/Indexes | 94 | 6 | 80 |
| Maps/Atlases | 94 | 6 | 73 |
| County Records | 93 | 7 | 76 |
| Marriage Records | 92 | 8 | 76 |
| Birth Records | 92 | 8 | 75 |
| Land Deeds | 92 | 8 | 66 |

| IMPORTANCE VS. NO IMPORTANCE | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tax Records | 92 | 8 | 65 |
| County, State, Province, or Country Histories | 91 | 8 | 82 |
| Military Records/Rosters | 88 | 11 | 70 |
| Published Family Histories | 88 | 12 | 74 |
| Directories | 88 | 12 | 71 |
| Family Group Sheets | 86 | 14 | 71 |
| Biographical Sources | 82 | 18 | 67 |
| Family Bible Records | 81 | 19 | 66 |
| Periodicals | 77 | 22 | 68 |
| Newsletters | 74 | 25 | 69 |
| CD-ROMs/Electronic Sources | 74 | 26 | 62 |
| Diaries/Personal Letters | 73 | 27 | 67 |
| Internet/E-mail | 71 | 29 | 56 |

Percentages may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

All listed types of materials had some importance to respondents. Combining the data for very important and important items, it can be seen that cemetery records, death records, and newspaper articles/obituaries, census records/indexes, and maps/atlases rank at the top. For each type of material, 94 percent of the respondents believed them to have some importance. These types of materials were followed closely by county records (93%), marriage records (92%), birth records (92%), land deeds (92%), and tax records (92%). The five least important types of materials were Internet/E-mail (71%), diaries/personal letters (73%), CD-ROMs/electronic sources (74%), newsletters (74%), and periodicals (77%).

In this study, respondents were not asked why or why not items were important. However, some speculation can be made on reasons why some materials are more important than others. It depends on what type of information the researcher needs to locate. If the

researcher is looking for birth information, cemetery records, birth records, and census records may be very important. Marital information can be found in cemetery records, marriage records, census records, and some land deeds. Information on deaths can be found in death records, cemetery records, and obituaries. All of the above mentioned items were among the top 10 resources deemed important by the respondents.

Another component in measuring importance may relate to how much information can be found in the source. Cemetery records, death records, newspaper articles/obituaries, and census records/indexes provide more information than newsletters and periodicals. As a result, these sources may be considered to be more important.

It appears that primary sources rate lower in importance than secondary items. Original sources of information, such as published family histories, family group sheets, family Bible records, and diaries/personal letters, do not rate as high as secondary sources such as cemetery records, death records, county records, and military records/rosters. This could be because primary sources are not available for all families. In addition, it is more likely that a researcher would find information on an ancestor in an item which has regional or national information than an item that concentrates on one family.

Periodicals and newsletters are better known for providing how-to information or giving search tips. For this reason, they were probably considered to be less important than other items. Biographical sources such as biography dictionaries and multi-volume sets of biographical information include names and information of significant individuals only. These sources are not important to researchers who have common-folk ancestors.

Linking Electronically to Other Collections

Eighty-five percent of the respondents indicated that the genealogical collection did not provide its users with the means to access other genealogical collections electronically (Table 14). This overwhelming percentage indicates several things: (1) the question was unclear; (2) the service is provided but users are unaware of the service due to inadequate promotion; (3) the genealogical collection does not offer the service; or (4) the respondent has no idea if the collection provides such a service. Additional research needs to be done to determine which possibility is most likely to be true.

Table 14 summarizes what percentages of the respondents were satisfied or not satisfied with linking electronically to other collections and the microfilm borrowing privileges.

Table 14

| LINKING ELECTRONICALLY | | | MICROFILM BORROWING PRIVILEGES | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *no.* | % | | *no.* | % |
| Satisfied | 14 | 14 | Satisfied | 50 | 48 |
| Not Satisfied | 1 | 1 | Not Satisfied | 8 | 8 |
| Don't Know/Not Available | 88 | 85 | Don't Know/Not Available | 46 | 44 |

Fourteen percent of the respondents indicated they were satisfied with the service; one percent was not satisfied. One respondent was not satisfied because there was no user manual or printed guidelines on how to link electronically to other genealogical collections. This poor service reflects on the staff responsible for the collection. It is the staff members responsibility to increase awareness of services provided to users and to educate the users on how to use provided services.

The large percentage of respondents who either did not know if the collection could link electronically to other collections or who indicated the service was not available is of great concern. Eighty-five percent of the respondents answered this way. This overwhelming percentage indicates one of three things: (1) the question was unclear; (2) managers of genealogical collections do not adequately promote this service; or (3) genealogical collections do not offer this service. Fourteen percent did distinguish whether the service was not available of if they did not know if the service was available. One percent said the collection could not link electronically to other collections while 13 percent said they did not know if the service was offered. The remaining 86 percent of the respondents did not distinguish between the two.

In order to link electronically to other collections, it would be beneficial to have the genealogical materials on the library's online catalog. To see what items are available in other collections, the genealogical collection would need a computer with Telnet or Internet capabilities. Telnet, or similar software, would enable the user to dial in to another collection, and the Internet would give the user the ability to access a collection's website, provided the collection has one.

Microfilm Services

As indicated by the survey results, microfilm services are provided by most genealogical collections. Less than one percent of the respondents indicated that no microfilm readers were available in the collection. Table 14 summarizes the percentages of the respondents who were satisfied or not satisfied with the microfilm borrowing privileges. In addition, it shows the percentage of individuals who did not know if microfilm borrowing privileges were provided by

the collection or if the service was not available. Table 15 indicates how satisfied respondents were of the number of readers available and the upkeep of the microfilm readers.

Most respondents were satisfied with the collection's microfilm readers. Forty-eight percent of the respondents were satisfied with the borrowing privileges of microfilm, eight percent were not satisfied, and forty-four percent said they did not know if the service was available or that the service was not offered through the collection. Twenty-six percent were very satisfied with the number of microfilm readers available; forty-seven were somewhat satisfied; and twenty-six percent were not satisfied with the number of readers. In terms of the upkeep of the readers, 70 percent were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied, and twenty-nine percent were either not very satisfied or not satisfied at all with the upkeep of the readers.

Table 15

**SATISFACTION OF MICROFILM READERS**

| | *Very Satisfied* | | *Somewhat Satisfied* | | *Not Very Satisfied* | | *Not Satisfied At All* | | *None Available* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* |
| No. of readers | 27 | 26 | 48 | 47 | 20 | 19 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| Readers upkeep | 31 | 30 | 41 | 40 | 19 | 19 | 10 | 10 | 1 | 1 |

There were many comments in regards to microfilm services. Some were pleased with the services while others were dissatisfied with the borrowing privileges and the readers themselves. Five percent of the respondents indicated that there were not enough readers. The available readers were old and labor-intensive, demanding high maintenance. In regard to the use of readers, four percent of the individuals indicated that the microfilm was difficult to read because the readers were in brightly lit areas. Others mentioned that there was no laptop space

available. Most readers do not make copies, and for those collections that do have readers which print information, the librarian was the only one who could make the copies. Other respondents mentioned that genealogical collections need to have separate machines for their users. In terms of accessing the microfilm, three users said that it took too long to receive microfilm. The records were so scattered that the time involved in writing for microfilm was detrimental to the process. Some collections did not have indexes to facilitate the use of the data on microfilm. Other microfilm had no reference numbers, identifying the specific microfilm desired.

Some suggestions made by the respondents were to increase the number of readers, clean readers daily, place the readers in dimly lit areas of the collection, and replace the current readers with motorized readers that permit self service copies, thus eliminating assistance by staff. In addition, those individuals responsible for the collection need to make the users aware of the borrowing privileges available, provided they offer the service.

Public copy machines

Public copy machines are important to most genealogical collections. The materials included in collections must be used in-house; therefore, family historians make copies of pages which provide useful information. Making copies saves time and provides documentation for information. Table 16 shows a breakdown of how satisfied respondents were with the number of public machines and the quality of the copies provided by the copy machine.

Table 16

| SATISFACTION OF PUBLIC COPY MACHINES | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Very Satisfied* | | *Somewhat Satisfied* | | *Not Very Satisfied* | | *Not Satisfied At All* | | *None Available* | |
| | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* | *no.* | *%* |
| No. of machines | 32 | 32 | 45 | 45 | 15 | 15 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Copy quality | 48 | 47 | 37 | 36 | 13 | 13 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 |

Most genealogical collections appear to have a copy machine available for its users; only three percent of the individuals mentioned that none were available. The number of machines available seem to be sufficient for the number of family researchers. Thirty-two percent said they were very satisfied and 46 percent said they were somewhat satisfied with the number. However, respondents implied that additional copy machines would be beneficial during peak times of usage of the genealogical collection. Four percent of the respondents indicated the need to increase the number of public copy machines. Fifteen percent were not very satisfied and four percent were not satisfied at all with the number of copy machines available.

Overall, members of the Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society were satisfied with the quality of copies produced by the available copy machines. Forty-seven percent were very satisfied and 36 percent were somewhat satisfied. Thirteen percent were not very satisfied with the quality of copies while only one percent of the respondents were not satisfied at all.

Although no comments were written explaining why respondents were not satisfied with the quality of copies, several were made about the copy machines themselves. One respondent reported that the copy machine at the collection he evaluated was not able to reproduce copies

on 8 ½ " X 11" sheets of paper. Other respondents indicated that copy machines could not produce double-sided copies. Another respondent stated that he had to borrow a key from a staff member every time he desired to copy something.

From the comments written by respondents, it can be concluded that users of genealogical collections desire convenience and efficient use of resources. In addition, copiers which permit books to open flat when making copies, enlargement and reduction of documents to be reproduced, double-sided copies, and a choice in paper size are users' preferences.

Overall Grade in Ease of Use

Seventy percent of the respondents indicated they could find the needed material in the collection relatively easy. Twenty-six percent said the collection was average to use, and four percent claimed that the collection was not easy to use.

One of the comments pertaining to this question was that the ease of use of the collection improves the more an individual uses the collection. This is not always true as revealed in other comments. Two of the respondents who indicated that the collection was not easy to use have researched family history one to five years; one respondent has six to ten years experience; and one respondent has researched between eleven and twenty years. It is unknown whether these individuals have used the same collection to do the majority of their research.

Staff

Staff members are an important part of the genealogical collection. Users come to the collection seeking help on how to find information or how to use specific resources. Unfortunately, knowledgeable staff members are not available during all hours of operation. As genealogy continues to grow in importance, and as more records in different formats become

available, staff members will increasingly become important to the genealogist. Staff will need to take on the responsibility for educating the users on how to use the various sources in different formats. Table 17 shows how respondents rated the availability and knowledgeability of staff members.

Table 17

| AVAILABILITY OF STAFF | | | KNOWLEDGEABILITY OF STAFF | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *no.* | % | | *no.* | % |
| Excellent | 28 | 28 | Very Knowledgeable | 47 | 46 |
| Good | 54 | 53 | Somewhat Knowledgeable | 47 | 46 |
| Poor | 18 | 18 | Not Very Knowledgeable | 7 | 7 |
| No Assistance | 1 | 1 | Not Knowledgeable At All | 0 | 0 |
| | | | No Assistance | 1 | 1 |

Eighty-one percent of the respondents indicated that the availability of staff was either good or excellent; 53 percent said staff availability was poor; and 1 percent indicated that no assistance was available. Ninety-two percent said that the staff was at least somewhat knowledgeable of genealogy and the genealogical collection. Seven percent said the staff was not very knowledgeable, and one percent indicated that no one was available to assist researchers.

Respondents showed concern that knowledgeable staff members were not available to help researchers. At least six percent of the respondents commented that more knowledgeable staff was needed. The respondents continued to explain that the collection has only one full-time staff member who is knowledgeable, and she is torn between her duties as a genealogical librarian and her librarian duties which are not affiliated with genealogy. Although other staff

members are available, these individuals do not have extensive knowledge of genealogy nor do they want to be "bothered" by researchers. One respondent claimed that the librarian actually drove researchers away. Other respondents indicated that although volunteers who staff collections want to assist users, their knowledge is limited. They are unable to provide assistance beyond census records; they are not able to give suggestions or alternatives for further research.

Satisfaction of Services Provided

Respondents classified several items as services offered by the collection. Some considered parking to be a service while others concentrated on the content of the materials and how the collection was organized. In addition, public copy machines, microfilm readers, the availability of table space, and staff were components used in determining the satisfaction of the respondents. Table 18 gives a summary of the level of satisfaction experienced by the members of the Ohio Genealogical Society, Summit County Chapter.

Table 18

| GENERAL SATISFACTION | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *no.* | *%* |
| Very Satisfied | 48 | 48 |
| Somewhat Satisfied | 47 | 47 |
| Not Very Satisfied | 6 | 6 |
| Not Satisfied At All | 0 | 0 |

Ninety-five percent of the respondents were satisfied with the services provided by the genealogical collection they evaluated and six percent were not very satisfied. None of the respondents were not satisfied at all. However, one individual stated that the shortage of parking

influences the number of individuals who attend genealogical programs. One other individual further commented that parking should be sufficient and free.

Six respondents indicated a need for more material in the collection. One area in which there was a shortage of material available was European records. One individual mentioned that additional genealogical books on each county are needed in the collection he chose to evaluate, and another person indicated that birth and death records should be available in the library. In addition, table space was inadequate, and the available table space should be restricted to the use by genealogists. In the case of public libraries with genealogical collections, the Dewey Decimal classification system was frustrating. Materials were scattered throughout the collection, making it difficult to locate them. Also, readers and copy machines should be in proximity to the collection. At least two individuals mentioned that the genealogical section should be closed off and a sign-in should be required in the hopes of decreasing the number of materials which become missing. Two individuals indicated that more shelf space was needed for future acquisition of materials, prompting the idea that genealogy is here.

Two other concerns were mentioned by the respondents. One concern was that users of genealogical collections must spend too much time retrieving the materials from the shelves. Many books and reference material were not shelved immediately. They formed piles upon piles of material on the tables, in no specific order, making it nearly impossible to find the materials when they were needed. A second concern was that many of the original documents have been shredded. The information contained in these original documents were typed incorrectly when transferred to another format or the microfilming of the originals were poorly done. In many cases, the data could not be deciphered.

Although respondents indicated they were satisfied with staff overall, respondents would like to see staff members better trained in genealogical research. In addition, some implied that staff needed training in how to be courteous and patient with genealogical researchers.

One service that a respondent thought to be an excellent idea was to have a loose leaf binder or a card file giving the surnames of families that have been searched or are in the process of being searched. Some collections provide this service. This binder or card file should include the researcher's name, address, and telephone number. In some cases, an E-mail address may have been included as well. The surnames were in alphabetical order.

Hours of Operation

Considering that the second largest percentage of respondents who do genealogical research work full-time (26%), it is important that collections be open long hours during weekdays and open on weekends. Collections need to be open week nights to accommodate those individuals who work during the day; however, collections need to open during the day to accommodate retirees (57%). Collections open on weekends benefit those individuals who not only work full-time but also benefit those researchers who choose to drive a distance to do research at non-local genealogical collections. Table 19 summarizes how many hours a week the evaluated genealogical collections were open to the public.

Table 19

| HOURS OF OPERATION | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *no.* | % |
| Less Than 10 | 1 | 1 |
| 10-20 | 4 | 4 |
| 21-30 | 10 | 10 |

| HOURS OF OPERATION | | |
|---|---|---|
| 31-40 | 20 | 19 |
| More Than 40 | 57 | 55 |
| Did Not Know | 12 | 12 |

Fifty-five percent of the respondents indicated that the collections evaluated were open more than 40 hours per week. Nineteen percent were open between 31 and 40 hours per week; almost 10 percent were open between 21 and 30 hours per week; almost four percent were open between 10 and 20 hours per week; and less than one percent were open less than 10 hours per week. Eighty-two percent were opened on weekends. Three respondents mentioned that this included Saturdays but not Sundays. Almost 12 percent were not open on weekends and 7 percent said they did not know if the collection was open on weekends. Some individuals indicated that those collections open on weekends, including Sundays, better accommodate the working individuals. Ninety percent said the genealogical collection was open sufficient hours to meet their research needs. Less than 10 percent indicated that the collection was not open sufficient hours to meet their needs.

Overall Evaluation of the Collection

Approximately 80 percent of the respondents indicated that the genealogical collection they evaluated was above average. Almost 17 percent said the collection was average. Less than two percent said the collection was below average, and less than one percent indicated that the collection was poor.

When evaluating the collection overall, the level of satisfaction with the types of materials were considered. In addition, satisfaction with the various services provided by the

collection were considered. From reviewing the results from the questionnaire, it was determined that the majority of the respondents were satisfied with the materials available in the collection, the availability of staff, how knowledgeable the available staff members were, the availability and quality of microfilm readers and public copy machines, and the hours of operation. With the high satisfaction rate, it is logical for the respondents to indicate that they were satisfied with the collection overall.

Other Comments Made by Respondents

It has been noted that computers are helping with genealogical research, making it possible to have greater access to distant records. Unfortunately, many researchers are intimidated by computers and choose not to use them. Some believe that computers are meant to replace the more traditional means of gathering information and believe it is best for them to no longer do research . They do not recognize that technology is meant to supplement and enhance research rather than replace it. They are intimidated by the computers because they are computer illiterate. One respondent stated that he feels more and more handicapped as more and more items go online. Some do not wish to become computer literate while others who do want to become more familiar with computers are unable to afford classes in computers. Another group of individuals are finding that family tree software programs are making it easy to record, organize, and maintain information.

A respondent wrote a comment stating that it is not necessarily what material a specific collection has because researchers are able to get the same information from more than one source. Instead, it is important if the item is readily available, if it can be physically read with the available equipment, and if it can be reproduced with ease. Another individual mentioned

the importance of having at least three sources with the same information. Documentation is very important, and many Internet resources do not give documentation. Another individual indicated that the usefulness of a collection is most significantly influenced by availability of basic primary and secondary sources, such as census indexes and town records. These are some of the more expensive items. CD-ROMs have the capability of storing much of this information, in higher quantity, for a more economical price. CD-ROMs were described by a respondent as getting "more bang for the buck". However, this same individual made the comment, "But I love books and it's hard to have any feeling for a disk!"

# CHAPTER 5
# SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Genealogical research is primarily done by one of two groups: retirees or full-time workers. This is in contrast to another study, done by Maritz Marketing Research in Fenton, Missouri, which stated that the interest in genealogy captivates the middle-aged. Retirees have the tendency to have more leisure time than full-time workers; however, full-time workers who are truly interested in researching family roots make the time to do their research. For this reason, it is important to have collections open week mornings, week afternoons, week evenings, and weekends. The collections evaluated by the members of the Ohio Genealogical Society, Summit County Chapter seem to be aware of the importance of opening the collections for many hours during any given week. Fifty-five percent of the respondents indicated that the collection was open more than 40 hours per week, and 82 percent said that the collection was open on weekends. Genealogical collections should continue to be open to the public more than 40 hours per week, including weekends. Those frequently visited collections which offer their services less than 30 hours per week should consider increasing their hours to better accommodate the many individuals who are involved with research.

Another characteristic of family researchers is that approximately 70 percent are considered middle class individuals, having an annual income between $18,000 and $55,000. These results coincide with a previous study done by Maritz Marketing Research, which indicated that genealogy is enjoyed most by middle class citizens. Members of the middle class have greater disposable income which would permit them to make copies of documents and pages of useful information. In addition, they would be able to travel to out-of-town collections

which may have more information on their ancestors. Lower-class individuals would not be able to afford these luxuries, and upper-class individuals would probably pay someone to the research if they deemed it necessary.

The availability of staff, the level of knowledge staff members have on genealogy, and the ease of use of the collection have an effect on how frequently researchers use specific collections. However, other reasons may have an impact as well. The number one reason may be that individuals do not have time to actively participate in such a time consuming hobby on a full-time basis. Family and work obligations may take precedence. Another possible reason why some individuals use the collection more frequently than others might be that the researcher's health may be declining, making research a physical challenge. The study revealed that 89 percent of the respondents were at least 50. In general, these individuals experience a greater chance of acquiring health problems than younger people.

Staff members, whether they are paid employees or volunteers, should be trained in the basics of genealogy and how to use the various sources which are available in the collection. Respondents indicated that although they were satisfied with the availability of staff and staff members' knowledge of genealogy, several were concerned that knowledgeable staff members were not available at all times when the collection was open. To combat this problem without adding additional staff, staff members working closely with the collection should offer to make appointments with the users. One-on-one help may assist researchers greatly. However, for the more experienced researcher, many staff members are unable to be of assistance. One possible alternative is to offer a training session for all individuals who may assist the collection's users. During this session, participants would become more familiar with the collection and the

services offered, go beyond the basics in how to do genealogical research, and be given advice on how to deal with the users. Another alternative would be for staff and users of the collection to gather together informally and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using various sources, problems encountered while researching and what was done to overcome these obstacles, and other topics which may interest both groups of individuals.

Overall, the members of the organization were pleased with the materials that were available in the collection and were satisfied with the collection they evaluated. The most available items appeared to be the more traditional secondary sources such as census records/ indexes; cemetery records; and county, state, province, or country histories. Primary sources such as family group sheets, family Bible records, and diaries/personal letters were less available. Secondary resources are easier to obtain and appeal to a larger audience than primary sources. Consequently, secondary resources are found more frequently in collections than primary sources. In addition, non-traditional sources such as information available on CD-ROMs or electronic sources and access to the Internet or E-mail are less available in genealogical collections since these sources are fairly new.

Approximately 86 percent of the respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the material available in the collection. Satisfaction appeared to be greatest among those items with the most information available. Newsletters, newspaper articles/obituaries, military records/rosters, census records/indexes, and cemetery records were among the most satisfying material. Technological sources, primary sources, birth records, and land deeds were among the least satisfying items. Technological sources are too new to the study of genealogy to receive much satisfaction from a more conservative audience. Primary sources such as diaries or

personal letters would entail the researcher sifting through a lot of unimportant information; they are not straightforward. These types of sources are more time consuming and many times may leave the researcher with more questions than answers. Similar to primary sources, birth records and land deeds may have not met the expectations of the researcher, offering less information than anticipated.

Not much can be done to improve the satisfaction level of primary sources, birth records, or land deeds. It is possible to inform users of the type of information most generally found in these less satisfying sources, thereby lowering users' expectations. However, something more can be done to improve the satisfaction with technological sources. Training programs which introduce researchers to the sources available online and on CD-ROM can be implemented by staff members. In addition, staff can educate researchers and other staff members on how to use the various sources currently available.

Fifty percent of the types of material explored in this study were considered to be important or very important by at least 91 percent of the respondents. Cemetery records, death records, newspaper articles/obituaries, census records/indexes, and maps/atlases were among the most important. The least important types of material included the Internet/E-mail, diaries/ personal letters, CD-ROMs/electronic sources, and newsletters.

The subject of computers seems to be present in any aspect of life. Genealogical research is no exception. E-mail is becoming a common means of transmitting queries all over the world. Genealogical periodicals are becoming available online, as are newsletters of genealogical societies and newspapers all over the world. Libraries with web pages and special interests in genealogy are offering links to Internet resources on genealogy. The Library of

Congress has been digitizing archival information available only in Washington, D.C. and has posted this information online. NOLA will develop a Digital Collection Service Center (DCSC) by September 1998, which will provide NOLA libraries the means to digitize local history collections. Other libraries will follow suit in the years to come. However, technology will not replace more traditional sources of information. Books continue to be published, and microfilm remains the best storage device.

As revealed in the study, not many respondents are taking advantage or have the opportunity to take advantage of technology. Eighty-five percent of the respondents did not know if the collection could electronically link to other collections or indicated that the collection did not provide this service. As technology gains more ground, more individuals will become aware of its role in research.

Overall, the members of the Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society who submitted responses were satisfied with the collections they evaluated. They were satisfied with the materials available in the collection as well as the services provided. Staff were knowledgeable overall, and the majority of the respondents indicated the collection was open sufficient hours to meet their needs. The comments provided were helpful in the analysis and greatly appreciated.

WORKS CITED


Amason, Craig R. 1988. Instruction for genealogists in the public library. *Current Trends in Reference Service* 22: 283-295.

American Library Association. 1992. Guidelines for developing beginning genealogical collections and services. *RQ* 32 (Fall): 31-32.

Baker, Russell P. 1986. Genealogical collections for the small institution. *Arkansas Libraries* 43, no. 2 (June): 10-12.

Boling, Yvette Guillot. 1991. Expectations: A patron's point of view. *LLA Bulletin* 54, no. 2 (Fall): 75-81.

Chideya, Farai. 1992. Climbing the family tree. *Newsweek* 28 December, 65.

Croom, Emily Anne. 1995. *Unpuzzling your past: A basic guide to genealogy*. 3rd ed. Cincinnati, OH: Betterway Books.

D'Elia, George, and Sandra Walsh. 1983. User satisfaction with library service--a measure of public library performance? *The Library Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (April): 109-133.

*Encyclopedia of Associations*. 1997. Detroit: Gale Research, Inc. Database online. Available from Vista.

Filby, P. William. 1993-1995. Genealogy. *Microsoft Encarta 96 Encyclopedia*. CD-ROM by Microsoft Corporation. Information by Funk & Wagnalls Corporation.

Fulkerson, Jennifer. 1995. Climbing the family tree. *American Demographics* 17, no. 12 (Dec): 42-50.

Khouw, Petta. 1997. Finding roots at the State Library of Ohio. *Ohio Libraries* 9, no. 2 (Spring/Summer): 4-7.

Lange, Diane C. 1989. Americana: Fertile interest in the family tree. *Insite* 16 January, 48-49. Database online. Available from Matter of Fact.

Meisels, Sarah. 1986. Building the genealogy collection in the public library: An interagency approach. *Illinois Libraries* 68 (April): 254-257.

Quinn, Patrick M. 1991. The surge of interest in genealogy reflects a populist stran. *Chronicle of Higher Education* 37, no. 36 (22 May): B2.

Robinson, Emma. 1995. Studying user satisfaction: Why do it? How to do it? Where next? One library's experience. *The New Review of Academic Librarianship*: 179-185.

U.S. Department of Commerce. Economics and Statistics Administration. Bureau of the Census. 1996. *Statistical abstract of the United States*: 8.

U.S. Department of Commerce. Economics and Statistics Administration. Bureau of the Census. 1997. *Statistical abstract of the United States*: 61, 105.

Waggener, Jean B. 1986. Genealogy for Homecoming '86. *Tennessee Librarian* 38 (Winter): 21-23.

Youmans, James G. "What Does It Mean To Be 'Middle Class'?" <http://www.cba.ua.edu/~cber/middle2.html> 28 March 1997.

# APPENDIX

School of Library and Information Science
(330) 672-2782
Fax (330) 672-7965

Kent STATE UNIVERSITY
P. O. Box 5190, Kent, Ohio 44242-0001

**An Evaluation of Genealogical Collections as Perceived by the Members of the Ohio Genealogical Society, Summit County Chapter**

September 22, 1997

Dear OGS Member,

My name is Deborah Keener. I have been a member of the Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society since 1992 and am currently working toward a Master's Degree in Library Science at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. I am interested in evaluating genealogical collections based on user satisfaction. The goal is to enhance genealogical collections to better meet user needs. I am asking that you take a few minutes of your time to complete this questionnaire.

Knowing that many of you may use more than one collection, I ask you to base your responses on the genealogical collection you visit most often. Your opinions are valued, and all responses are anonymous and confidential. There is no penalty of any kind if you should choose not to participate in this study, and you may withdraw from participation at any time. Your responses will be greatly appreciated by me and many other individuals who may one day be in charge of a genealogical collection.

For your convenience, I have included a self-addressed, stamped envelope which can be used to return your questionnaire. Please return the questionnaire no later than October 13, 1997. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or my advisor, Dr. Richard Rubin. If you have any questions regarding research at Kent State University, you may contact Dr. M. Thomas Jones at (330) 672-2851.

Sincerely,

Deborah Keener, Graduate Student
1077 Laird Street
Akron, Ohio 44305-3207
phone: (330) 784-2858

Dr. Richard Rubin, Advisor
Kent State University
School of Library and Information Science
Room 314, Library
Kent, Ohio 44242-0001
phone: (330) 672-2782

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

**An Evaluation of Genealogical Collections as Perceived by the Members of the Ohio Genealogical Society, Summit County Chapter**

For the purpose of this questionnaire, a genealogical collection refers to any designated area of a building or any whole building which dedicates its resources to the discipline of genealogy research. Such buildings may include but are not limited to libraries, historical organizations, or universities.

Most individuals who do family research visit many collections. For the purpose of this questionnaire, please base your responses on the genealogical collection you use most often.

**CIRCLE THE LETTER NEXT TO THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE.**

1. Have you ever sought information on ancestors from a genealogical collection?

   A. Yes (**ANSWER QUESTIONS 2 THROUGH 23**)
   B. No (**ANSWER QUESTIONS 19 THROUGH 23**)

2. In the last 12 months, how many times did you use the genealogical collection?

   A. 1-3 times
   B. 4-6 times
   C. 7-10 times
   D. more than 10 times
   E. I have not used the collection.

3. In the question below, place an "X" next to the types of materials that are available in the genealogical collection. In the second column, indicate how satisfied you are/were with those materials using the following scale:

**1 = very satisfied  2 = satisfied  3 = not satisfied**

In the third column, indicate how important these materials are/were to helping you locate missing information using the following scale:

**1 = very important  2 = important  3 = not important**

If the material is not available in the collection, please indicate in the third column how important these materials would be to helping you locate missing information. Use the following scale:

**1 = very important  2 = important  3 = not important**

| Type of material | Available Items (X) | Satisfaction 1, 2, or 3 | Importance 1, 2, or 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| biographical sources | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| birth records | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| CD-ROMs/electronic sources | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| cemetery records | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| census records/indexes | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| county records | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| county, state, province, or country histories | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| death records | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| diaries/personal letters | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| directories | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Family Bible records | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| family group sheets | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Internet/E-mail | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| land deeds | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| maps/atlases | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| marriage records | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| military records/rosters | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| newsletters | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| newspaper articles/obituaries | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| periodicals | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| published family histories | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| tax records | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| other _____ (please specify) | _____ | _____ | _____ |

4. Some genealogical collections have the ability to link electronically to other collections, such as the collection in Fort Wayne, Indiana. If your collection offers this service, are you satisfied with this electronic service?

   A. Yes
   B. No
   C. This service is not provided by the collection or I do not know if this service is available.

   If you are not satisfied with this service, please explain.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

5. Many collections offer their users the opportunity to borrow microfilm from other organizations. Are you satisfied with this borrowing privilege provided by the collection?

   A. Yes
   B. No
   C. This service is not provided by the collection or I do not know if this service is available.

   If you are not satisfied with this service, please explain.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

6. How satisfied are you with the number of microfilm readers available for use by the public?

   A. very satisfied
   B. somewhat satisfied
   C. not very satisfied
   D. not satisfied at all
   E. The collection has no microfilm readers available.

7. How satisfied are you with the upkeep of the microfilm readers?

   A. very satisfied
   B. somewhat satisfied
   C. not very satisfied
   D. not satisfied at all
   E. The collection does not have microfilm readers.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

8. How satisfied are you with the number of available public copy machines?

   A. very satisfied
   B. somewhat satisfied
   C. not very satisfied
   D. not satisfied at all
   E. The collection has no public copy machines.

9. How satisfied are you with the quality of copies produced by the public copy machines?

   A. very satisfied
   B. somewhat satisfied
   C. not very satisfied
   D. not satisfied at all
   E. The collection has no public copy machines.

10. Given the following grading scale, which grade would you assign to the ease of locating needed materials in the collection? **CIRCLE THE APPROPRIATE GRADE.**

   A = excellent
   B = good
   C = average
   D = below average
   F = poor

11. The availability of staff to assist family historians can best be described as _____

   A. excellent
   B. good
   C. poor
   D. does not exist

12. In general, how knowledgeable is the staff who assist you?

   A. very knowledgeable
   B. somewhat knowledgeable
   C. not very knowledgeable
   D. not knowledgeable at all
   E. no one is available to help researchers

13. In general, how satisfied are you with the services provided by the genealogical collection?

   A. very satisfied
   B. somewhat satisfied
   C. not very satisfied
   D. not satisfied at all

**BEST COPY AVAILABLE**

14. How many hours per week is the genealogical collection open for public use?

A. less than 10 hrs/wk
B. 10-20 hrs/wk
C. 21-30 hrs/wk
D. 31-40 hrs/wk
E. more than 40 hrs/wk
F. I do not know.

15. Is the genealogical collection open on weekends?

A. Yes
B. No
C. I don't know

16. Are the hours of operation of the genealogical collection sufficient for your research needs?

A. Yes
B. No

17. Overall, what grade would you give the genealogical collection in terms of meeting your needs? **CIRCLE THE APPROPRIATE LETTER GRADE.**

A = Excellent
B = Good
C = Average
D = Below Average
F = Poor

18. Please use the space below to comment on ways the genealogical collection can be improved and/or to clarify any answers you have given above.

**BEST COPY AVAILABLE**

19. Which category includes your age?

A. under 18
B. 18-25
C. 26-35
D. 36-49
E. 50-70
G. over 70

20. What is your employment status?

A. part-time
B. full-time
C. retired
D. unemployed
E. other (please specify: _____)

21. What is/was your occupation?

A. Professional (teacher, engineer, accountant, etc.)
B. Manager or proprietor
C. Blue collared worker (factory, laborer, carpenter, etc.)
D. Clerical or sales
E. Student
F. Homemaker
G. Other (please specify: _____)

22. How many years have you been a member of the Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society?

A. less than 1 yr
B. 1-5 yrs
C. 6-10 yrs
D. 11-20 yrs
E. more than 20 yrs

23. Approximately, how long have you been researching your family roots?

A. less than 1 yr
B. 1-5 yrs
C. 6-10 yrs
D. 11-20 yrs
E. more than 20 yrs

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.
Please return questionnaire by October 13, 1997 to:

*DEBORAH KEENER*
*1077 LAIRD STREET*
*AKRON, OH 44305-3207*

**BEST COPY AVAILABLE**